

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 04067 302149Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 SSO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9362

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E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, CI
SUBJECT: HUNGER STRIKE IN NINTH DAY

REFS: SANTIAGO 3979 AND PREVIOUS

1. THE RETURN OF CARDINAL SILVA TO CHILE MAY 26 HAS RAISED
HOPES THAT A SOLUTION TO THE HUNGER STRIKE, NOW IN ITS NINTH
DAY, MAY BE NEAR. WHILE PRESIDENT PINOCHET AND INTERIOR MINISTER
FERNANDEZ MADE STATEMENTS OVER THE WEEKEND THAT THE GOC WOULD
NOT NEGOTIATE WITH THE "POLITICALLY MOTIVATED" STRIKERS, WE ARE
INFORMED BY A UN SOURCE THAT CHURCH/GOC DISCUSSIONS HAVE
TAKEN PLACE AND WILL CONTINUE.

2. ESTIMATES OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HUNGER STRIKERS RANGE AS HIGH
AS 140 -- INCLUDING 14 IN CONCEPCION. APPARENTLY THERE ARE BOTH
"PERMANENT" AND TEMPORARY STRIKERS. THE FIRST CATEGORY IS MADE
UP OF THE ORIGINAL 60 PLUS, WHILE THE SECOND CONSISTS OF
SYMPATHIZERS WHO JOIN FOR A DAY OR TWO. FOR EXAMPLE, GABRIELA
BRAVO DE LORCA, A LEADER OF THE COMMITTEE OF FAMILIES OF THE
DISAPPEARED INFORMED US TODAY THAT 25 PRIESTS AND OTHER RELIGIOUS
PERSONS HAVE JOINED THE STRIKERS FOR A 48 HOUR PERIOD. (COMMENT:
THIS MAY EXPLAIN THE REPORT RECEIVED BY THE CONSULATE THIS MORNING
THAT AN AMERICAN PRIEST AND NUN WERE AMONG THE STRIKERS.

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ELSEWWBVF THE STRIKE IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN
HIS INTERMEDIARY POSITION).

3. THERE ARE NO REPORTS AS YET OF SERIOUS MEDICAL PROBLEMS.
UNICEF HAS A DOCTOR CHECK THE NINE THERE EVERY SIX HOURS.
PRESUMABLY THE ICRC IS EXERCISING SIMILAR PRECAUTIONS, AND REPORTEDLY
THE VICARIATE OF SOLIDARITY HAS GOT SOME 17 DOCTORS AVAILABE

TO CHECK ON THOSE IN THE CHURCHES. ACCORDING TO A UN SOURCE, ONE OF THE CONDITIONS IMPOSED ON THE STRIKERS BY THE VICARIATE IS THAT ANY STRIKER WHO BECOMES SERIOUSLY ILL OR ENDANGERED WILL DROP OUT OF THE STRIKE. THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED UNDER COVER OF THE PARTICIPATION OF THE TEMPORARY GROUPS. SRA. LORCA, HOWEVER, DENIES THAT ANY OF THE ORIGINAL STRIKERS HAVE LEFT OR INTEND TO.

4. COMMENT: NO FORMULA FOR A SOLUTION IS YET EVIDENT. AN "EL MERCURIO" EDITORIAL OF MAY 28 SUGGESTED THAT THE GOC FORM AN IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATING COMMISSION TO TRY TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THE DISAPPEARED PERSONS PROBLEM. SRA. LORCA TELLS US THE RELATIVES WOULD GO FOR THIS IDEA IF THE COMMISSION INCLUDES MEMBERS OF THE FAMILIES OF THE DISAPPEARED. REPORTEDLY THEY WILL BE SEEING THE CARDINAL LATER TODAY. HOWEVER, GOC AGREEMENT TO INCLUDE RELATIVES OF THE DISAPPEARED ON ANY SUCH INDEPENDENT COMMISSION SEEMS UNLIKELY.
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